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switching elements between the inputs and the outputs, wherein each of the all-optical signal paths has substantially the same pathlength; and

selectively actuating the 2x2 optical switching elements to interconnect the electromagnetic signals between the inputs and the outputs.

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful attention accorded the instant application.

Regarding the references, Applicants will submit an Information Disclosure Statement shortly after submission of this amendment.

Regarding the drawings, Applicants will submit formal drawings when the application is allowed.

Regarding the title and abstract, applicants have amended same to reflect the invention as claimed.

Regarding the Obviousness-type Double Patenting Rejection, Applicants will submit a terminal disclaimer shortly. In any event, if the Examiner provides a Final Office Action in response to this amendment, Applicants expect that submission of a terminal disclaimer should be an allowable After-Final submission to place the claims in condition for allowance.

Regarding the rejections of claims 40-41, 7, 76-77 based on 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Jin et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,256,430 and Young et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,091,867, Applicants submit that the amendments to claims 40 and 77, adding the

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limitation of ~~canceled~~ claim 55 that the optical switching elements are solid state, clearly overcomes these rejections.

The amendments herein do not introduce any new matter. It is believed that the claims herein should be allowable to Applicants. Accordingly, allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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